November 3, 2026

Office of the Mayor
City of Seattle
Katie B. Wilson, Mayor

Executive Order 2026-09: An Executive Order prioritizing outreach and engagement with Seattle vehicle residents and improving programs and enforcement of local laws to improve both outcomes for vehicle residents and the conditions of Seattle Rights of Way;

Recitals:

According to the King County Regional Homelessness Authority's 2026 Point-in-Time Count, there are 18,365 individuals experiencing homelessness countywide, 64% (11,829) of whom are unsheltered; and

According to the 2024 Point-in-Time Count, 27% (2,569) of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness countywide reside in a vehicle such as a car, truck, trailer, or recreational vehicle (RV). This number is expected to increase once the comprehensive 2026 Point-in-Time Count is released; and

The precise number of RVs on Seattle streets is unknown, but this population likely includes not only unsheltered homeless individuals and families but also traveling workers such as nurses; veterans and others seeking specific services at the Veterans Administration or other Seattle-based facilities; tourists visiting Seattle; housed Seattle residents who also own an RV for travel, office, or other use.

Some RVs occupied by homeless individuals, and especially RVs associated with criminal activity, cause significant quality-of-life impacts to Seattle neighborhoods, residents, and businesses. These include impacts to roadway accessibility, sanitation and environmental concerns, garbage, noise, hazards due to improper use of propane tanks, improperly disposed-of needles, etc.

Seattle residents, workers, and businesses deserve to have the negative impacts of RVs on their neighborhoods addressed, and homeless people living in RVs for shelter and safety deserve to have their rights respected and their needs addressed, including realistic pathways into shelter and housing.

The Mayor's shelter acceleration initiative and 2027-2028 Proposed Budget includes funding for two safe lots, anticipated to provide space for 182 vehicle residents, with completion in 2027.

With the leadership of Councilmember Strauss, the City Council passed and the Mayor signed four pieces of legislation related to vehicle residents including Council Bill (CB) 121279 which expands the authority of the Director of the Department of Finance and Administrative Services to sign leases and open safe lots, safe storage, and other resources faster for people who live in their vehicles and CB 121281 to facilitate storage of RVs for individuals who wish to transition into shelter but for whom the loss of their vehicle is a barrier.

The Mayor vetoed a fifth piece of legislation passed by the City Council, CB 121283, which would create a permit program requiring people living in RVs to get permits, accept available shelter, and meet program requirements in order to remain in compliance, citing operational complexity; the costs of standing up a complicated new city bureaucracy; legal risk; unintended consequences for a vulnerable population; and the fact that this legislation does not solve for the actual barriers to more effectively addressing criminal activity and neighborhood impacts of RVs.

The Mayor has invited the City Council to consider an alternative pathway as laid out below.

Recitals:

According to the King County Regional Homelessness Authority's 2026 Point-in-Time Count, there are 18,365 individuals experiencing homelessness countywide, an 72% increase since 2016, 64% (11,829) of whom are unsheltered; and

According to the 2026 Point-in-Time Count, there has been a 9% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness from 2024 to 2026; and

According to the 2024 Point-in-Time Count, 27% (2,569) of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness countywide reside in a vehicle such as a car, truck, trailer, or recreational vehicle (RV). This number is expected to increase once the comprehensive 2026 Point-in-Time Count is released; and

According to the King County Medical Examiner's Office, there has been an almost threefold increase in deaths annually of people presumed to be homeless since the City declared a civil emergency on homelessness, with 312 decedents in 2024, compared to 124 decedents in 2015; and

The City of Seattle has a duty to its residents to ensure that local laws are enforced so that rights-of-way and other public spaces are maintained for the safe and sanitary use of all residents.

The Mayor announced plans to rapidly expand shelter in January 2026 and published a Seattle Shelter Plan in September 2026 to build 960 units of shelter by 2027 that will serve up to 1,750 individuals per year. This plan includes funding for two safe lots.

The Mayor's 2027-2028 Proposed Budget allocates $37 million annually to build and sustain the Shelter Plan, including two new safe lots for vehicle residents.

The City Council passed and the Mayor signed four pieces of legislation related to vehicle residents including Council Bill (CB) 121279 which expands the authority of the Director of the Department of Finance and Administrative Services to sign leases and open safe lots, safe storage, and other resources faster for people who live in their vehicles and CB 121281 to facilitate storage of RVs for individuals who wish to transition into shelter but for whom the loss of their vehicle is a barrier.

The City of Seattle should work to ensure that residents residing in vehicles receive adequate support and services so that such residency is short, that vehicle residents are able to move to more stable shelter and housing, and that vehicle residents do not negatively impact others.

Where possible, the City should prioritize improved administration of existing laws and enhancement of proven engagement programs to assist vehicle residents rather than creating a new permit program that could have unintended consequences on vulnerable populations.

Therefore, I, Katie B. Wilson, Mayor of Seattle, order the following actions:

Section 1: Prioritize resources for service providers and the Unified Care Team to support both the successful navigation of RV residents to new RV Safe Lots and provision of sufficient services at safe lots to support RV residents moving to more stable shelter and housing.

I direct the Human Services Department (HSD) to immediately deploy 2026 funding for: (1) the successful opening and rapid use of the Glassyard Commons Safe Lot, expected to open in November 2026, and (2) for the expansion and success of the Unified Care Team (UCT), in partnership with contracted providers, for intensive outreach and engagement with individuals residing in vehicles in Seattle. This intensive outreach should:

a. Develop a citywide by-name list that connects vehicle residents to the safe lot and any associated services to support their path to stable housing;
b. Provide quantitative and qualitative information to the City about the current population of vehicle residents in Seattle;
c. Provide quantitative and qualitative information to the City about recreational vehicles that are being used for office, daytime or other non-residential purposes; and
d. Identify challenges and barriers faced by vehicle residents that can immediately inform City services and programs.

These same resources should be deployed to support the expedient opening of an additional RV Safe Lot, expected in 2027.

Section 2: Establishment of a cross-departmental and community work group to rapidly identify improvements and/or barriers to effectively using existing laws and programs to both successfully engage with vehicle residents and improve conditions in Seattle Rights of Way.

I direct my Director of City Governance and Human Services to convene a working group, composed of the City Budget Office (CBO), Seattle Police Department (SPD), Human Services Department (HSD), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Seattle Fire Department (SFD), Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS), Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), and service providers who work with vehicle residents. The workgroup team will:

a. Incorporate feedback from vehicle resident outreach to inform programs and action;
b. Identify improvements to existing vehicle resident programs and enforcement of existing local laws;

c. Identify new service interventions, such as RV storage, for consideration;
d. Evaluate current efforts to address criminal activity where it is associated with RVs in Seattle Rights of Way, leading to improved enforcement; and
e. Propose changes to existing law or policy that could improve the outcomes for vehicle residents and neighborhoods, including, but not limited to, updating the City's 72 hour parking rules.

These actionable recommendations should individually and collectively result in improved outcomes for vehicle residents, fewer vehicle residents in Seattle, and safer and more sanitary conditions in Seattle Rights of Way.

Within 60 days, the working group will deliver recommendations to the Mayor. Recommendations will include any executive-transmitted legislation needed to change City laws to effectuate the intent of this order, and legislation will be transmitted to the Council by March 31, 2027.